



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter  
1<sup>st</sup> Special Troops Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (M)  
Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07



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August has come to an end and with it we bring you the outstanding achievements of our soldiers and civilians from our Phoenix Battalion. In this issue you will hear from the Nighthawk's new Platoon Leader, the Eagles praise the work of their civilian maintenance support, the Hurricanes describe their Bradley gunnery familiarization, the Renegades highlight the performance of the Civil Affairs/Psychological Operations Section, and a message from the Battalion Commander, Phoenix 6.

## NIGHTHAWKS

### The A Co Prophet Platoon

*By 2LT Jordan Maxcey, Platoon Leader*

It has been just over a week and a half since I joined the Prophet Platoon and the ranks of the secret squirrels. My learning curve has been steep but the Prophet Soldiers and my Platoon Sergeant SSG Youngblood have been a great help getting me caught up. Even with just a short time in the platoon, I have already noticed a few things that make this platoon special. First and foremost are the Soldiers. I could not have asked for a more intelligent, dedicated and "unique" group of people. Second is our mission. We get to work with



**CPL Henley on patrol**

some of the most high speed equipment in theatre and play a major role in helping the Brigade catch bad guys. Last are the Soldiers again. I can't tell you how much I have already enjoyed working with your Soldiers. Here are some of my first impressions of them.

SGT Hunt is the quiet professional of the platoon. As the shift leader during the afternoon, SGT Hunt has to deal with me during my peak question asking hours and I am sure he can tell you that I ask a lot of questions. SGT Bradley is my other shift leader and is just an all around great guy. He unfortunately gets to deal with me in the morning when I come in with no idea about what is going on. SPC Knee, I can already tell, is my "wild child". He knows the equipment very well and has taught me a lot but I have a feeling that he will always keep me on my toes.

SPC Wilson is very soft spoken but has already proven himself to be a great asset to me and the platoon. He demonstrates a lot of patience everyday as he sits down with me to explain equipment capabilities and limitations...

over and over again. SPC Barnett is by far the most serious Soldier in the platoon; I am not always certain what he is thinking but I can see his dedication. SPC Weber has just come



**SPC Melika in Tarmiyah**

back to the platoon after spending a long stint in the orderly room. I had a good time as she had me crawling under my vehicle as we inspected its serviceability. SPC Melieka, or "Camel" as I have been told, has been on leave for the majority of my time with the platoon but I eagerly await his return and the solid linguistic skills he brings to the platoon. CPL Henley is by far the old man of the platoon. He is a very hard worker and I am always amazed by the quality and speed of his work. SPC Shealy rivals and I think surpasses SGT Hunt for the quietest of the bunch. Although he doesn't say much, I can always trust him to get the job done.

SSG Youngblood, my platoon sergeant, is our resident body building champion and is probably the most upbeat of the bunch. She is doing a fine job taking care of our Soldiers. And finally our interpreters: Fadya, Issam, Osama, Raad, and Nashet. Without them we wouldn't be able to do our mission. Well that's my crew and I feel blessed to have them.



**Youngblood**  
**Resident Iron Woman**

Before I sign off, we would just like to express our thanks and love to all our family members back home. We miss you and look forward to seeing you soon.

Nighthawk 26 Out

## **EAGLES**

### **Civilian Technicians and the JNN Network**

Skilled personnel are required to install and maintain the many high-tech elements that comprise the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Signal Network. The Joint Network Node and its KU band Satellite trailers are vital components of this network. This equipment was fielded immediately before the deployment and requires subject matter experts on the battlefield. Civilians from General Dynamics and Datapath have worked side by side with Signal Soldiers to ensure the success of the JNN since the day it was validated. Their commitment to the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade and to the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division is continually proven to commanders here in Iraq.

General Dynamics has a long and successful history with Army communications support. In the days before JNN, they provided support with Mobile Subscriber Equipment. When the Brigade's Signal Company signed for two JNNs, its Soldiers were already in training with General Dynamics instructors. One of these instructors, George, is a knowledgeable former Soldier who has supported the company at NTC and throughout this deployment. George works closely with the Company's Net Operations section. He handles complicated issues with individual JNNs and various other tasks around the Brigade. George's knowledge and expertise are essential to the ever expanding JNN network. General Dynamics' has given the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division a quality product and followed through with exceptional support.



### **DSN in action**

The technicians from Datapath have also demonstrated their dedication to excellence from the outset of this deployment. Although the KU Satellite trailers they maintain are highly reliable, these technicians are very good at troubleshooting and repairing the most difficult problems. Simon is the Datapath technician most familiar in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade's area of operations. He is a hard working former Soldier who does not shrink from getting dirty. His colleague, Gabe is a new addition to Camp Taji and supports every 4ID element on the FOB. If a KU generator needs repair or any other KU issue needs resolved, Simon and Gabe will go anywhere on the battlefield. Their care and maintenance of equipment is exemplary. Our Datapath equipment has minimal downtime and should remain reliable for years to come.

These civilian technicians and many others who support the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade are combat multipliers. They have earned the respect of the Soldiers around them and have trained many of us on our best equipment. General Dynamics and Datapath have performed exceedingly well since the JNN was fielded. Moreover, their representatives in Iraq are top notch. The Network would be difficult to maintain without dedicated and professional civilian technicians on our team.

## **HURRICANE**

I cannot believe it is already September. Time has flown by quickly for the Hurricanes. This past month the company has been very busy. This month alone the company conducted over 1150 combat patrols and repaired over 25 vehicles.

I wanted to highlight an event that the company did around mid-August. For the first time in Iraq, the company rolled its Bradley Fighting Vehicles to conduct crew familiarization on the Bradleys' main gun. We conducted a joint combat patrol with Renegade Company to Husseinya, a town in the Raider Brigade's area of operation. Once we arrived on site, the patrol cleared the area of any possible improvised explosive devices. The Bradley crew, then, went through their pre-firing drill. After the completion of pre-firing drill, the Bradley crew test fired the main gun. There was a lot of excitement when the Bradleys fired their main gun. We will continue to test fire our weapon systems to make sure our weapons work when we need them.



**Above: Hurricane Soldiers test fire their Bradley Vehicle Fighting's main gun in Husseinya, Iraq (25 August 2006).**



The Hurricane Soldiers have performed exceptionally. They will continue to execute every mission superbly in Iraq until the day they board the plane to come home to Ft. Hood.

Hurricane 6---CPT Thao B. Reed

## RENEGADES

Hello again Renegade Families,

As August ends, it is a time to sit down, ponder about the great things the Renegades have been doing, write those things down, and share them with you. This month has been a very difficult one; one that has had exceptional highs and exceptional lows. As a commander, I focus on the positive things. This month I will talk about some of the challenges the Renegades have faced and how we are dealing with those challenges.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Renegades in sweeping both the Soldier of the month board and the NCO of the month board. Every month the top NCOs and Soldiers are selected throughout the Battalion to compete in a panel of questioning by the First Sergeants and of course Command Sergeant Major Seaman. SGT Curtis Zachary from S3 and SPC Asa Rudman from legal were the hands down winners. Congratulations to both of them.

If you regularly read this column, you will know that one of my goals is to talk a little about each of the sections and give you a little glimpse inside the daily lives of the Soldiers, and to explain about the diverse mission that each of our sections has. This month's story has to be on our Civil Affairs/Psychological operations section; led by Major Herbert Joliat and SFC Christopher Williams, with SPC Brian Murray serving as their gunner/driver.



### SGT Zachary and SPC Rudman receive awards

Several days a week these gentleman, along with their translator Zena, from Jordan, risk their lives in-order to get their mission accomplished. I had been bugging SFC Williams to go out on a mission with them, and I finally got the opportunity. We traveled to a town called Tarmiyah where MAJ Joliat met with the head Sheik, and conducted negotiations on projects around the Town.

Tarmiyah, once a hot bed of insurgency, had grown rather quiet due in large part to the efforts of MAJ Joliat and SFC Williams, building clinics, roads and an unbelievable youth center complete with basketball courts and soccer fields. The projects were more than I expected and it was something you truly could see as a sign of progress in a war torn country. However, the progress and steps forward are not without risk and less than a week later, MAJ Joliat and his crew were struck by an IED. CPT Edward Gilman, one of our lawyers, was also out on mission with them. The IED sent both SFC Williams and SPC Murray to the Baghdad hospital, where LTC Cross, CSM Seaman, CPT (Doc) Powell, Chaplin Fell and I were able to visit them. They were already in good spirits, and looking strong. They were presented with purple hearts and have shown an incredible amount of courage since the incident. When I asked if

there was anything I could get them, SPC Murray had only one request, a cold Dr. Pepper (which I was able to grant). They were given the choice of recovering in Kuwait, and getting out of a little work, or recovering here on Camp Taji, with their friends and fellow Soldiers, and they quickly chose Camp Taji. SFC John Elliot and SPC Thomas Kiger, quickly volunteered to replace them, and have been doing an outstanding job ever since. Major Joliat did not even miss a step and immediately returned to a tough but necessary Mission, and CPT Gilman, has become one of the only JAG Lawyers in the Army to earn a Combat Action Badge.



### **MAJ Joliat conducts negotiations with a local leader**

Families, friends, and anyone else reading this newsletter, let me tell you, the men and women serving over here are the bravest, most courageous and most honorable people I have ever had the pleasure of serving with, much less Commanding. Thank you and God Bless.

Renegade 6 --- CPT Dan Walker

## **PHOENIX 6**

Greetings from Taji! As we close on another hot month over here the very first signs of cooler weather are appearing. It is only 108 degrees with a slight wind on the last day of August down from the usual 115 degrees plus weather that we have been averaging through July. This is a remarkable and welcome difference and hints of a late summer are in the air as college football and NFL regular season games are on the horizon.

It has been a tough past three weeks for the Phoenix battalion as we have suffered several wounded in our HHD and one KIA in our attached EOD company. MSgt Clemmons (USAF) was with us only a short amount of time with our new EOD company but his loss was painful for his company and our battalion. We are a team of teams with many specialized and unique units that compliment each and the Brigade Combat Team and we share both triumphs and losses. He was a hero in his team and he was honored with a very moving memorial service. Our hearts go out to his family and we pray daily for his family's well being and thank him for his dedication and service to his country.

Your soldiers are doing well and CSM Seaman and I are keeping a close eye on everyone to keep them sharp, focused and to ensure they are well cared for. The CSM and I are so proud of the soldiers in the battalion. They are at the top of their game and are doing remarkable things daily. Alpha Company is providing some of the best intelligence and TUAV support that I have ever seen in my time in the Army. Bravo Company has the largest deployed Signal network in theater and they keep us in constant touch with each other across the Brigade's combat area. HHD is doing a host of tasks daily but focused on commanding and controlling the Brigade and providing the Brigade Commander and CSM with 1<sup>st</sup> class security as they transit the battlefield. HHC continues with remarkable success with our

counter IED team - Task Force Iron Claw. HHC also secures the Civil Affairs Teams on a daily basis keeping them safe and focused on their mission, runs the best battalion maintenance section I have ever seen, and provides excellent soldiers in our Battalion operations center. Our MP platoon has been out working with the Iraqi Police here in Taji training them to take on more and boosting their performance by leaps and bounds. The Civil Affairs Teams are working hard with over 147 construction projects valued at 43 million dollars. They are doing spectacularly at keeping our local Iraqi contractors hard at work and making a huge difference in the Brigade. Our new EOD company is a top notch outfit and filled with experienced professional soldiers who do a dangerous mission 24/7 every day. The PSYOPS detachment continues to expand their missions and are supporting the BCT with excellent results.

Thank you for your excellent support of your soldiers and be proud of the super things that they are doing every day in support of our Nation. They are each one a hero and the CSM and I have never been more proud of these great professionals!



## **To Dare Is To Do**

**Larry A. Seaman**  
**Command Sergeant Major**  
**U.S. Army**

**John W. Cross**  
**LTC, EN**  
**Commanding**